March 7, 2018

From Dean D’Elia

Alumni, students and friends,

February and March have been busy but exciting months here at CC&E. Our college hosted the 2018 LSU Environmental Lecture Series, "Coral Reefs in Crisis." Two of my former collaborators, Professors Ruth Gates and James Porter, who were featured in the Sundance award-winning documentary "Chasing Coral," spoke about coral bleaching as well as Antonio Busalacchi, President of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. It was a remarkable, informative, and sobering event.

For those of you who may not know, I began researching coral reefs in graduate school, and they have always held a special place in my heart. In my personal opinion, these spectacular places are among the most beautiful ecological systems on earth.

As mentioned at the beginning of the semester, it has been 10 years since the inception of our Bachelor of Science in Coastal Environmental Sciences in 2008. The program has grown very rapidly. And, our students have continued to contribute to our coastal legacy in many ways. This newsletter will showcase students that have been accepted into numerous graduate programs across the country and won scholarships as well as notable staff and alumni who carry the LSU CC&E banner.

Although your spring semester studies are fully underway, I encourage you to take advantage of seminars and additional opportunities to enhance your education.

Sincerely,

Christopher F. D’Elia, Ph.D.
Professor and Dean

Want to learn more about CC&E?

Supporters and potential supporters of the College of the Coast & Environment are invited to a presentation and tour of the College.

Contact Kathe Falls for details at kfalls1@lsu.edu
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Check out our photos from Coral Reefs in Crisis

LSU CC&E hosted 2018’s Louisiana Environmental Lecture Series, “Coral Reefs in Crisis,” on March 1-2, in the Dalton J. Woods Auditorium at the Energy, Coast, & Environment Building. Speakers and panelists included:

- Ruth Gates, director of the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology and president of the International Society for Reef Studies. She is featured as a principal cast member and science advisor in the Netflix documentary “Chasing Coral.”
- James W. Porter, Josiah Meigs Professor of Ecology at the University of Georgia and principal cast member and science advisor in the Netflix documentary “Chasing Coral.”
- Christopher D’Elia, professor and dean of the College of the Coast & Environment, who was also a principal cast member in the Netflix documentary “Chasing Coral.”
Before the evening screening and panel discussion on March 1, James Porter visited St James Episcopal Day School to teach second graders about corals. Then, at 6 p.m., audiences viewed the Netflix documentary, “Chasing Coral,” featuring Gates and Porter. Following the screening, a panel comprised of Gates, Porter, D’Elia, and Busalaachi discussed coral bleaching and its relevance to the global community.

On March 2, the event continued with a series of lectures from key speakers and ended with a final panel discussion featuring Porter, D’Elia, Busalaachi, and DeLong.

Click here for photos.

GOMURC at GOMOSES

LSU was well represented at the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference (GOMOSES), held on February 5-8, 2018, in New Orleans. The conference was titled “The Three R’s of Gulf Research,” which stood for “Response, Restoration, and Resiliency,” and featured Robert Twilley, executive director of LSU’s Louisiana Sea Grant College Program and professor in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Science, as one of three plenary speakers. Twilley’s talk focused on boosting communications with the public to create greater accountability and improving adaptive management, to better learn what works and what does not so scientists do not make the same mistakes twice.

Charles A. Wilson III, chief science officer of Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GOMRI) and emeritus professor in the LSU Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences, was another plenary speaker. He was on the panel of the closing plenary, “The Future of GOMOSES: Maintaining Momentum - Seeking Synergy,” along with Larry McKinney, a founding member and chair of GOMURC and former chair and member of the Flower Gardens National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

In addition, Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GOMURC) hosted a workshop within the GOMOSES conference titled “Examining the 1990 Oil Pollution Act to improve the governmental and scientific response to future oil spill events.” Christopher D’Elia, GOMURC board member and professor and dean of the LSU College of the Coast & Environment, organized the workshop, which addressed three objectives: 1) to educate participants about the Oil Pollution Act’s (OPA’s) history and intent; 2) to discuss the priority science and research needs for responding to a spill like the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and how OPA succeeded or failed to address those needs; and 3) to discuss longer-term legal and social issues that may be improved in OPA.
ACCOLADES

CC&E Faculty, Staff Honored at LSU Employee Recognition Jazz Brunch

On February 7, 2018, five faculty members from CC&E were recognized for their many years of service to the university:

- **25 Year Service Award**
  
  **April Hawkins**, administrative specialist

- **30 Year Service Award**
  
  **Margaret Reams**, professor, Department of Environmental Sciences

- **40 Year Service Award**
  
  **Charles Sasser**, professor, Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences  
  **Erick Swenson**, research associate, Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences

- **50 Year Service Award**
  
  **Ronald DeLaune**, professor, Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences

Most notably, **Ron DeLaune** was recognized for 50 years of service. A guru in the field of wetland biogeochemistry, his primary responsibility is research. He excels in every measurable metric in research, including the publication of books, journal articles, research grants, and citation impacts. During the last five years, DeLaune published one book, six book chapters, and 53 refereed journal articles, at a rate of approximately one publication every month.

In addition, he literally wrote the book in the field of wetland biogeochemistry: His 2008 book "Biogeochemistry of Wetlands," as well as his 2013 companion volume, "Methods in Biogeochemistry of Wetlands," are highly regarded as classics in the field.

DeLaune is not required to teach in the classroom, but he has gone out of his way to support and mentor graduate students. He has served on the advisory committees of many PhD or master's
We congratulate all our faculty listed here for their years of dedicated service to LSU. We are truly grateful for their outstanding contributions to the College of the Coast & Environment.

Measuring the Magnitude of Research: John Day's Venture into Google Citations

By Christine Wendling

In 2005, Jorge Hirsch created the Hirsch Index, or h-index, a metric that attempts to measure the productivity and impact of a scholar based on the scholar's most cited papers and the number of citations they have received in other publications. By these standards, John W. Day, Jr., professor emeritus in the Department of Oceanography and Social Sciences, has certainly measured up.

As of the time of this publication, Day has 19,887 citations and an h-index of 72, according to his Google Citations page, a remarkable achievement. He attributes this number to the fact that he has about 400 publications, an unusually high amount, and that he has worked on a broad range of subjects and written a number of synthesis articles with colleagues from around the world.

"I've published half a dozen articles in Science and Nature and those tend to be cited a lot as well," Day said.

His most cited publication is a textbook on estuarine ecology that is also often used as a general reference book and has about 1,700 citations, while his most cited article is about the status of deltas worldwide with nearly 900 citations. While Day thinks citations are a good way to measure his impact on the scientific community, it is not the only way. He also thinks it's important to make an impact on his students.

"I've been the major professor of 70 students. Most faculty members, even at the end of their career, if they've got 20, that's unusual. And, a lot of my students have gone on to be leaders in the next generation," Day said.

He believes so many students have sought him out to be their major professor because he doesn't try to force his students into a certain way of thinking.

"I do just the opposite, in fact. The best students always run way out in front of you and drag you along with them," Day said.

For the most up-to-date information, view Day's Google Citations page here: https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=if5IX-QAAAAJ&view_op=list_works&sortby=pubdate
CC&E's George Xue Wins Phi Kappa Phi Non-Tenured Achievement Award

George Xue, assistant professor in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences, was selected as the winner of the Phi Kappa Phi Non-Tenured Achievement Award this month. Phi Kappa Phi is a part of the Honor Society Caucus, a consortium of the most prestigious honor societies in the nation.

An awards ceremony and reception will be held on Wednesday, March 14, 6-8 p.m., at the Lod Cook Alumni Conference Center on LSU’s campus. The ceremony will feature Matthew Lee, vice provost for Academic Programs and Support Services, as keynote speaker.

Xue’s research interests include nutrient, carbon, and sediment dynamics in coastal ocean and continental shelves; coupled physical-biogeochemical modeling; coupled ocean-wave-sediment transport modeling; hydrology; and sequence stratigraphy.

Learn more about Xue’s research here: http://www.oceanography.lsu.edu/xuelab/

Congratulations, Dr. Xue!

Two CC&E Students Receive 2018 Discover Scholar Awards

LSU Discover Undergraduate Research Program has announced the 2018 winners of the Discover Scholar Awards. Award recipients received a $1,500 travel stipend and were honored at a March 6 ceremony. The College of the Coast & Environment was the only college to have two Discover Scholar recipients: Amanda Fontenot and Madeline LeBlanc, both undergraduates in Coastal Environmental Science.

Fontenot was recognized for her research on eroded carbon in Barataria Bay and the possible impacts it could have on climate change and rising sea levels. Her faculty mentor for the project is John White, John and Catherine Day Professor of Oceanography & Coastal Science.

LeBlanc’s award-winning research involves looking at the content of sediment cores from the Atchafalaya Delta in order to quantify the nutrient and carbon content of an active deltaic system and better understand what to aim for when attempting to convert inactive deltas to active deltas. LeBlanc’s faculty mentor for the project is Robert
Congratulations to these exemplary students!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The Right Stuff: Systematic Approaches to Improving Emergency Response

By Christine Wendling

LSU Alumnus Charlie Henry has more than 30 years of experience with disaster management in the Gulf of Mexico and currently serves as the director for NOAA’s new Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center (DRC). He spent 13 years at LSU as a research associate working for Ed Overton, professor emeritus of environmental sciences. Henry also worked with Nancy Rabalais and many others. One of his first projects, now 30 years ago, was investigating the impacts of toxic oil and gas production water discharge on coastal Louisiana. Concurrently with that research, he was working on developing enhanced methods for forensic fingerprinting of oil in the marine environment.

"That project was a great opportunity to continue my education and get real-world experience doing applied research and applying science to actually solving environmental problems," Henry said.

Henry has worked on-scene for hundreds of chemical and oil spills, such as Exxon Valdez in 1989, the 1991 Kuwait Oil Fires, the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, and the hundreds of oil and chemical spills that resulted from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Having to deal with large-scale crises on a regular basis, Henry has discovered the best approach to emergency response is to remain calm and be methodical.

"What makes a good first responder is one that doesn't panic. I view big complex incidents like a schematic. Then, I can see how all the different parts interrelate with each other and visualize the critical drivers of the situation. I 'divide and conquer,' or isolate all the problems into less complicated problems that I call boxes and then work my way out of those boxes until I have accomplished my mission," Henry said.

He attributes his systematic approach to emergency response to the education he received at LSU.

"My military electronics background and working with Dr. Ed Overton and the foundation that I got from LSU, provided me with the tools that I now use to solve these problems. LSU provided me a great opportunity to not only continue my education, but more importantly, to do real research and be part of the nationwide research community and work on high-visibility projects," Henry said.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

April Ellis
Undergraduate Senior, Coastal Environmental Science

April Ellis exemplifies excellence. Active in the LSU community, she serves in many student organizations, such as Bengal Bound and CES Advocates. In addition, she serves as a mentor on the Tiger Transition team and as team leader in STRIPES.

For her capstone research project, Ellis is researching the effects of plastic contamination in the Gulf of the Mexico, particularly during Mardi Gras. Instead of being thrown away, beads left on the street are blown into the storm drains by street cleaners.

During high school, her burgeoning interest in environmental sciences drew her to LSU's College of the Coast & Environment (CC&E). She preferred LSU CC&E to other programs in her home state of Georgia due to LSU's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. Ellis felt this would allow her the opportunity to perform field work that she would be unable to do at other universities.

What was the key to your success at CC&E?

Looking back on my time at CC&E, I owe a lot of my appreciation for the field and success to the support of my professors and Dean D’Elia. The most impressive thing about my professors is that they do a lot of research and are well-known in their respective fields. Dean D’Elia has made a lasting impression on my life. Talking to him is what inspired me to focus on doing public health. During times of personal struggle, the dean was a great support system. He encourages all students to stop by and talk to him because he always has time for his students.

Do you plan on continuing your education after CC&E?

I plan on pursuing a master's degree in public health focusing on environmental health and hope to be an environmental analyst for either the Environmental Protection Agency or the Center for Disease Control. I've already been accepted into numerous programs including LSU Health Sciences, Emory University, University of South Florida, and Florida State University. Although, I have not made a decision on which school to attend.

Any tips for potential or current CC&E students?

Get to know your professors, form friendships with your classmates, and get involved. Get to know your professors because they are willing to do what it takes to make sure that their students succeed. They have an open door policy and are always there to help. Talk to them if you have a problem. What I loved most about CC&E were the small classrooms, because I usually had multiple classes with students in the program and gained many friendships in this family-like environment. These friendships have proven to later help me with study sessions and clarifications on classwork.

Joey Winston
TAF Scholar
Undergraduate Junior, Coastal Environmental Science

When did you realize you wanted to major in coastal environmental science?

When I was in my junior year of high school, I was walking along the beach of my local park pondering what I wanted to study in college. I had often played at this park growing up, climbing on the old pine
Joey Winston posing in front of a banner with the words: making a difference on the Gulf Coast. Credit: Christine Wendling

roots and catching hermit crabs off the dock and had come to know it as a place of refuge from my busy life. On my little stroll, I was noticing some of the changes that had occurred over the years—the imposing pine that once held the rope swing was now leafless and bleached white as its roots had succumbed to the encroaching salt water, and the picnic table that I had often snacked at after school was now roped off because its foundation had eroded out from under it. I realized that the park was disappearing and it was at this moment that I wanted to protect my little refuge, that I understood I wanted to attend LSU because of its unique program in coastal environmental science.

**How has CC&E helped to prepare you for your career?**

One of my favorite features of the College of the Coast and Environment is that it has the opportunities of a big university but the accessibility of a small school. In my first semester, even as an incoming freshman, I was able to get a research position in Dr. Mike Polito's Marine and Coastal Trophic Ecology Lab where I assisted with a project that tracked the effects of the Deep Water Horizon oil spill throughout the ecosystem. My research experience from this endeavor helped me secure my current internship position at the Louisiana Office of Public Health, where I work to mitigate the harmful effects of environmental hazards like mold, lead, and radon gas. Most importantly, these projects will help to address any environmental factors that threaten the public's health.

**Congratulations on your recently awarded TAF Scholarship. What impact has it had on your goals?**

It is because of the TAF Scholarship that I was able to accept an internship position at the Louisiana Office of Public Health instead of working this semester. With the extra income from this award, I will be able to gain insightful experience at an agency where I hope to one day work, an opportunity for which I am deeply grateful.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Join Us As We Celebrate**

Join us as we celebrate the accomplishments of students, alumni, faculty, and staff and honor those who are contributing to our legacy. On Friday, April 27, we will observe the 10-year anniversary of the Coastal Environmental Sciences Program and host our 2018 convocation.

**April 27, 2018**

More details to come.

**CC&E ALUMNI -- New job? New location? We want to hear from you!**

Send your Alumni Update to kfalls1@lsu.edu

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**STAY CONNECTED:**